



THE CALIFORNIA REGIMENT

Wooden Nickel 2008 After Action Report

Friday, May 2, Evening

As usual, the “Vegas Detachment” was late, even more so than usual, however, thanks to some unexpected mechanical trouble with our wagon. So, as normal, we set up our detachment’s tents in the dark. And as usual, I didn’t get to sleep until the wee hours of the morning.



Saturday, May 3

As I had not been to this part of California before, I didn't know what to expect of the landscape. As dawn came, I saw that our camp was at the edge of a clearing. Though the morning was colder than I am used to, there wasn't much to complain about and I felt we were pretty blessed with the weather.

The morning was uneventful. We didn't have drill like we normally do, which the enlisted men found as nothing to complain about.



In the late morning, we made an attempt to push the Rebels out of the area, but they were too well prepared for us. I managed to get out pretty well un-scathed, and I felt sorry for our center company as they had to march through a few inches of water, plants, and thousands of bugs.

The afternoon saw to it that our fallen brothers were avenged. The 71st pushed through on the enemy's left flank and captured the Rebel artillery. We took few casualties. Once again, the 71st was lucky to be holding the road rather than the swamp in the middle of the field.



Dinner was excellent that night, as it always is, and I got to bed early, only to be woken up at some horrible hour, I think it was 0300, to do picket. No one like doing it, but it sure beats having equipment stolen or allowing the Rebels to attack us while we're sleeping. Picket was uneventful and mostly consisted of the others on duty and myself discussing how much we wanted to be sleeping.

Sunday, May 4

We were once again blessed with pleasant weather in the morning. After breakfast, most of our company and civilian help went to church. I, however, stayed in camp to help the cook with anything she needed done and to make sure that my equipment was in good, working order.

We were told that we were once more going to attempt to push back the Rebels. The morale was high, until the 71st was told what its assignment was going to be in the upcoming skirmish. We were told that our company was to march straight at the middle of the Rebels, who had spent the night digging in and fortifying their positions. On top of all that, our orders put us in the middle of the swamp which was most of the field. Naturally, the outcome of the battle was less than favorable. Ultimately, the only ones who escaped unwounded from our company were the Lieutenant and myself.



In the afternoon, our commanders seemed to gain a little sense and used some sneaky tactics which ultimately won us the day. The 71st was ordered to hide in a barn on the edge of the battlefield and wait for the Rebels to move past us on the road, at which point we sprung our trap and emerged behind the cornered foe. The battle was a success and finally pushed the Rebels out of the area and back to Virginia to lick their wounds. Al though we also seemed to take a real hit when Pvt. Pawlowski went down.



The 71st, after having completed its orders to push the Rebels out, proceeded to break camp to return to our normal posts. I am writing this from within what we had believed to be our repaired wagon. Yet even now, we sit, immobile, not more than ten miles from where our problem began on Friday night.



End of report.

Pvt. St. John

71st Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, Company B